

Battlefield's Forge

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Summary: Some doubt because legends can be false. Some fear him because how he was made. Yet none deny he's good at what he does: Fight, kill, and conquer. Master Chief's courage and skill forges alliances of legend, never to be forgotten.

Battlefield's Forge

Disclaimer: Not mine.

A/N: Besides language and a bunch of action and probably gore, there aren't any other warnings I could give.

The whole ship shuddered under the assault of plasma cannons.

Master Chief grimaced, fists tightening around his holstered pistols as he thought of how they had gotten into such a predicament.

They were skimming the atmo with the Covenant cruisers breathing down their necks. The whole city lay decimated before them from the slip space jump that had been made in the wake of Regret's ship months before.

Master Chief was back from his little traipse in space.

The city used to look dusty and slightly dull, but still alive.

Now it just looked... dead.

It was a battlezone, and the Chief and the handful of shock troopers he was saddled with were heading right into it.

"This doesn't feel right." One named Joe announced stiffly, half his face riddled with scars.

"I know what you mean," An older soldier named Sandler grunted in agreement, "Just riding this piece of shit doesn't compare to surpassing the sound barrier with good ol' drop pods."

"Now you ladies quit your bitchin'" Sarge snapped with his usual finesse, "Captain Keyes needs ground troops down there NOW, otherwise-"

"Then wouldn't the drop pods be faster?" A younger shock trooper interrupted, adding almost insolently, "...Sir?"

"Obviously there's a good reason for that, son. And-" The Sarge replied, restraining for biting off the soldier's head in an unusual amount of control.

But then the boy had to interrupt again, "Which is why I'm saying, Sarge-"

The Sarge was a black and green blur as he suddenly went from sitting stiffly to looming over the unfortunate soldier, "And I'M saying, soldier, that if you interrupt me again, I won't hesitate to personally ram this rifle up your insolent ass and toss you off this bucket of rust myself!"

"I would appreciate if none of you insulted my ship again. At least, not if you're planning on remaining inside BEFORE we reach the ground." The pilot said airily, a tint of steel to her voice even as she maneuvered the ship around the plasma blasts of their pursuers.

"All right then," Sarge corrected, shooting a slight smirk in the pilot's direction even if she couldn't see it, "off this nice and SHINY rust bucket."

"Thank you, sir."

"Anytime." The Sarge said.

Losing interest in the argument, the Sarge turned towards the silent Spartan. He had it in good confidence that shock troopers never could stand the Spartans. Though, the tense silence alone could prove that. And the fact that their eyes never met the Chief without a large amount of malice pouring through them.

"Don't need no manufactured freak from a lab..." The Sarge remembered one muttering under his breath, "Aren't good old regular soldiers enough anymore?"

The Sarge didn't normally like fighting among his ranks, but there was really nothing he could do short of mind control, which was an idea the Sarge went against fully, that would change the boy's mind. Him and half the men with him. But then again, they had never been in a battle with any Spartan until then...

"How you holdin' up, Chief?" Sarge grunted. He never called the Spartan 'son' anymore on account that by now John had proved his worth many times over in the Sarge's eyes.

"Would feel better with the ground at my feet and targets to blow to bits." Master Chief replied shortly, and the Sarge could almost

imagine the grim expression on the armored soldier's face.

"Wouldn't we all." A regular UNSC soldier stated under his breath.

"No. I meant: How you holdin' up, Chief." The Sarge repeated.

The Chief visor tilted slightly as he turned to regard the Sarge curiously. Then his shoulders stiffened slightly and he turned once more to look blankly at nothing.

"I don't want to talk about it."

How long had it been?

Days? Weeks since he had last heard from Cortana?

Damn it, he shouldn't have LEFT her on that damn Covenant station! What was it called, the High Charity?

The Chief glanced over the regiment he had been sent down with. There weren't very many. A dozen shock troopers, all of which looked uncomfortable and on the edge. And maybe a dozen or so regulars, each more young looking than the last.

He didn't think the regulars would last very long.

But the shock troopers were older. More experienced. Each would live up to his own worth and that was something the Chief knew he could count on. Despite the fact that all the shock troopers blood boiled at the mere sight of the Spartan.

Their hatred didn't go unnoticed. But neither did their fear.

There was nothing the Chief could do about it. And he didn't much care to.

As long as they were battle worthy and could hold the ground behind him, the Master Chief didn't really care if they were pigs with wings.

Yet still, even after all these weeks, it felt oddly silent without the A.I.'s chatter in his head to fill it up.

"Now I don't want to have to babysit you on the field cause' your mind's on other things. Specifically kicking yourself for matters already done and over with." The Sarge hissed, low enough that no one but the Chief could hear.

"Don't worry." The Chief said coldly, "You won't have to."

"Hittin' the dirt in 3!" The pilot suddenly announced, her voice strained as she battled physically with the controls.

"You heard the lady! Saddle up!" The Sarge roared, having already checked his gear and using the mere seconds to check the others, especially the green regulars.

The Spartan, along with the rest of the UNSC soldiers in the transport, felt their blood heat. Finally they would see some

action!

The back door whooshed open and rushing air immediately filled the silence. The moment the transport was a few feet off the ground, the soldiers rushed forward, as if they had been coiled and set for this exact moment.

Plasma blasts and exploding dirt met them, the roar of the retreating transport filling their ears.

"Head for cover!" The black man shouted unnecessarily. But it was an order that still had to be said.

The Spartan, along with a couple of the shock troopers, had already started moving the moment their toes made contact with solid earth.

Unfortunately, one or two of the regulars didn't react quick enough and were caught by one of the plasma blasts. The others heard the cries and smelled the burnt flesh, but they already knew the soldiers were dead.

Diving behind a particularly large crumbled wall, Master Chief whipped the sniper off his back and peeked over the edge.

He heard the rat-tat-tat's of battle rifles, but knew it was more a waste of ammo than anything when shooting at an enemy hundreds of feet up in the sky. Chalking it up to lack of experience for those shooting, the Chief ignored them even as he heard the Sarge screaming at them to hold their fire.

He breathed deeply, watching the banshees coming at them in speeds that would rival their own Human fleet jets. Their armor and velocity made it near impossible to get in a good hit, but the Chief knew their weakness, as should a good handful of the soldiers with them if they took it in their minds to think before shooting.

Plasma shots peppered around him but the Spartan wasn't deterred. He kept his aiming reticule on a banshee he had picked the banshee in the front.

"Shouldn't waste your sniper bullets on those," A shock trooper, the one named Sandler, commented from beside him, "I've seen hundreds of soldiers waste a good amount of those on flying Covenant bastards."

"I'm sure you have." The Chief commented, sniper still trained on the banshee as it started to fly past them. He wasn't at all riled by the fact that the shock trooper had attempted to sneak up on him. Apparently the trooper was crazy enough to treat the battlefield like a playground.

Before something else could come out of Sandler's mouth, the Chief tracked the banshee's movement ahead and put more pressure on the trigger.

The more vulnerable, black innards of the machine finally showed itself and the Spartan pulled the trigger.

At first, all that was seen was the white trail of the speeding

bullet tearing through hundreds of feet like it was no amount of distance at all. Then came the sniper blast. And lastly... the banshee wobbling in the air slightly before exploding in an intense white and blue blast.

Like a trainwreck, all eyes were drawn towards the explosion as more banshees ran into the exploded flying craft before they could veer off.

Apparently they decided a short retreat was in order.

"Shit..." The Chief heard another, younger shock trooper breathe.

"Er... Good shot." Sandler said begrudgingly.

Master Chief just looked at him, before stowing away his rifle and looking towards the Sergeant.

The black man sent an appraising smirk towards the armored soldier before turning to the rest, who were still staring at the sky awestruck.

The same thought was running through their heads.

Nobody but nobody could've made that shot. The banshees were too high and too versatile a craft to even track much less consider taking down in one shot. And if they were going to be technical about it, taking down THREE in one shot.

Having spent more than a little time saddled with the Chief on the field, the Sarge had already passed the mind-numbing feats the Spartan could produce and was no longer affected by it. Basically, he had already accepted the fact that the Chief was something special, but he wasn't going to bestow any privileges on him for it.

"Now if you're all done gawking," Sarge said irritably, "I suggest we head for Red Platoon and give the support we were sent to give."

Snapping out of their daze, the men fell into formation, each trying their damndest not to openly gawk at the armored man in their midst.

"He wouldn't be like that if they hadn't manufacture that freak." Maloney hissed to the shortest shock trooper of them all, and the only one standing close enough for him to whisper to.

Kiara, one of the four women in their little squad, shot him a look of disgust before snarling, "Piss off, Maloney. Don't get your balls in a twist just 'cause you're jealous."

"And don't get all pissy on me because you wish you had balls." Maloney, hefting his battle rifle, growled back.

"You two back there, shut the hell up and fall in formation!" The Sarge ordered before continuing forward.

Grumbling, the two obeyed.

The Chief took it upon himself to take up the last position. And since the Sarge didn't complain, that was where he remained.

He recalled the image of the terrain back in his mind, having memorized it after a single glance before they were shoved on board the transport. This wasn't the first time that he had been placed into support missions, teamed with experienced as well as newer non-experienced troops. But it was the first time he had ridden with shock troopers.

The UNSC must've been getting desperate.

The Covenant forces had pulled back their flag ship as well as their other larger crafts out of range of the MAC guns. But this didn't mean they stopped sending in streams of their smaller ships to continue their assault on the Earth. Every once in a while, even a large ship managed to land, despite the UNSC's valiant efforts.

Besides the MAC guns, the defensive ground, and their own will, the Human forces just didn't have that much of an advantage over the Covenant. Especially when it came to technology and superior numbers. Ever since the attack began, the Covenant surrounding Earth had merely been growing in size. Soon even the MAC guns wouldn't be enough to keep them back.

And if that wasn't worse enough already, the UNSC's fleets had been spread too thin throughout the quadrant, having to defend their other human-occupied worlds from Covenant diversionary tactics.

If their interest in this thing called 'The Ark' on Earth hadn't been so great, Master Chief was sure the planet would've been glassed the moment the Covenant had laid siege to it two months ago.

Their supplies were running low. Even without knowing the bigger picture, Master Chief knew the Human forces were going to have to pull something drastic in order to come out of this bind alive.

They were in the tree line now, their eyes adjusting slowly to the lack of sunlight in the shade. Everyone but the Chief, that is, whose visor had already compensated for the change in light point two milliseconds after they had traversed within it.

Maybe they had slight cover from high flying enemies, but each and every soldier knew that danger was not that far away. Even some of the newer recruits didn't drop their guard. Others... well, let's just say the Sarge kept them on their toes.

Either they shaped up, or they were dead.

A sudden 'snap' in the foilage.

Treve, one of the newer recruits, turned slightly as he asked the Spartan behind him, "Did you hear that? Did you-" But the tan-skinned youth cut himself as he looked at the empty space behind him, "Hey... where did you go?"

The Chief didn't even attempt to answer as he heard the recruit turn and ask another of the company, "Did you see where the Spartan went?"

As he pressed deeper into the foilage, the Chief's magnified hearing managed to catch someone hiss, "Shut up." before clonking Treve on the head.

Not quite sure what he was looking for, the Spartan paused a bit as he tried to locate where he had heart the noise. He could hear the troops moving parallel to where he crouched, hidden in the brush. And if he was right, he was not the only one hidden...

Slight movement... THERE!

The Chief sprung forward before the enemy even realized he was there.

Back with the troops, Sandler began getting edgy. He was near the middle of the formation, but when he glanced back and saw a confused regular and the Spartan missing, he began to get a little nervous.

What had made the Spartan leave so suddenly?

Then a warbled cry was heard throughout the forest, the sound of a pistol and the thump of a dead body alerting the rest of the men.

"It's a trap!" Someone declared.

Everyone tensed, ready to dive for cover, weapons in hand-

"Don't MOVE!" Sarge ordered, his tone one that conveyed no disobedience.

Trained to follow orders, no matter how much it went against their instincts, the shock troopers froze as their superior officer had ordered.

But a few of the younger regulars darted off anyways.

"Sons a bitches! I said DON'T MOVE!" Sarge raged.

Maloney grabbed one by the shoulder none-too-gently while Joe tripped another. But the third ran off ahead, screaming.

Sarge made a grab at for the irrational soldier, but missed. Knowing it was too late, his eyes widening, the black man cried out, "Everyone GET DOWN!"

Everyone dropped to the ground even as the idiot tripped the well hidden bomb the Sarge had just discovered. Hands flew instictively over their heads as the soldiers pressed their faces to the dirt, praying that neither the explosion nor deadly debris would tear through their bodies.

Before the dust had even settled, the whole forest sprang to life. And as the shock troopers and remaining regulars picked themselves off the ground, they found the Spartan smack dab in the middle of it, weapons blazing and death trailing behind.

End
file.